

**Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education Hearing
“Local Perspectives on the No Child Left Behind Act”
Thursday, April 12, 2007
Opening Statement
Chairman Kildee**

I’M PLEASED TO WELCOME MY FELLOW SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBER, MR. DAVIS, THE PUBLIC, AND OUR WITNESSES, TO FLINT AND TO THIS HEARING ON “LOCAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT.”

IN FEBRUARY, THIS SUBCOMMITTEE HELD ITS FIRST HEARING OF THE NEW CONGRESS.

I SAID THEN HOW MEANINGFUL IT WAS TO ME TO HOLD THE GAVEL AGAIN AFTER TWELVE YEARS IN THE MINORITY.

IT IS EVEN MORE MEANINGFUL TO ME TODAY TO HOLD THAT GAVEL HERE IN FLINT, WHERE I WAS BORN AND RAISED AND TAUGHT IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

AS CHAIRMAN OF THIS SUBCOMMITTEE, ONE OF MY TOP PRIORITIES IS TO WORK WITH MY COLLEAGUES, DEMOCRATS AND REPUBLICANS, AND EDUCATORS IN MICHIGAN AND AROUND THE COUNTRY, TO IMPROVE AND REAUTHORIZE THE NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT THIS YEAR.

WE IN MICHIGAN KNOW BETTER THAN ANYONE THAT OUR SUCCESS IN THE 21ST CENTURY ECONOMY WILL BE DIRECTLY TIED TO OUR ABILITY TO CONTINUE TO PRODUCE A HIGH QUALITY WORKFORCE.

AND THAT ABILITY IS, OF COURSE, DIRECTLY TIED TO OUR ABILITY TO PROVIDE EVERY CHILD WITH A WORLD-CLASS EDUCATION.

SINCE 2002, CONGRESS AND THE PRESIDENT HAVE UNDERFUNDED NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND BY \$56 BILLION.

LAST YEAR ALONE, FULLY FUNDING NCLB WOULD HAVE MEANT AN ADDITIONAL \$331 MILLION FOR MICHIGAN SCHOOLS.

THE PRESIDENT’S PROPOSED BUDGET FOR 2008 WOULD UNDERFUND THE LAW BY ANOTHER \$15 BILLION, FOR A TOTAL OF \$71 BILLION.

HOWEVER, I AM HOPEFUL THAT WITH THE CHANGES IN WASHINGTON THIS YEAR, WE WILL START TO DO BETTER.

BUT, FUNDING ONLY IS PART OF IMPROVING NCLB.

WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND THE IMPACT NCLB HAS HAD ON ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND HOW IT CAN SUPPORT STANDARDS THAT WILL HELP OUR STUDENTS COMPETE WITH STUDENTS AROUND THE WORLD.

WE NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE QUALITY OF TESTS UNDER NCLB, INCLUDING FOR LIMITED-ENGLISH PROFICIENT STUDENTS AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, AND HOW NCLB CAN SUPPORT EDUCATORS' INTEREST IN HIGH-QUALITY TESTS THAT HELP TEACHERS DIAGNOSE STUDENTS' STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES.

WE WILL LOOK AT THE INDICATORS THAT DETERMINE ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS AND AT DIFFERENT MODELS, SUCH AS GROWTH MODELS, TO LEARN HOW TO IMPROVE AYP TO ENSURE THAT IT TELLS US WHAT WE NEED TO KNOW ABOUT OUR SCHOOLS AND THAT SCHOOLS GET CREDIT FOR THE PROGRESS THEY MAKE.

AND, WITH REGARD TO THE EFFECTS OF NOT MAKING AYP, INCLUDING SCHOOL CHOICE AND TUTORING, WE WILL ASK HOW THE LAW CAN BEST HELP EACH STUDENT AND ALSO HELP SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL SYSTEMS IMPLEMENT LONG-TERM SYSTEMIC REFORMS.

I LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING FROM OUR WITNESSES TODAY A RANGE OF LOCAL PERSPECTIVES ON HOW NCLB HAS WORKED AND WHAT WE CAN DO TO MAKE IT WORK BETTER.

I AM CONFIDENT THAT THEIR TESTIMONY WILL PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE COMMITTEE'S UNDERSTANDING OF HOW THE LAW HAS IMPACTED NOT ONLY FLINT, BAY CITY, SAGINAW AND BAY, GENESEE, SAGINAW AND TUSCOLA COUNTIES, BUT ALSO PLACES LIKE THEM ALL AROUND THE COUNTRY.

AND, I LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING TOGETHER WITH MR. DAVIS, WITH MY RANKING MEMBER, MR. CASTLE, CHAIRMAN MILLER AND RANKING MEMBER MCKEON, AND ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE, ON A BIPARTISAN REAUTHORIZATION OF NCLB THIS YEAR.

THANK YOU.